

**METHOD FOR CREATING A FUNCTIONAL INTERFACE
BETWEEN A NANOPARTICLE, NANOTUBE OR NANOWIRE,
AND A BIOLOGICAL MOLECULE OR SYSTEM**

5 **STATEMENT REGARDING FEDERALLY SPONSORED
RESEARCH OR DEVELOPMENT**

Not applicable.

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Field of the Invention

10 This invention relates to the field of fullerenes and more specifically to the field of biochemical sensors comprising chemically sensitive field effect transistors having nanotubes.

Background of the Invention

15 An increasing interest has occurred in the development of chemical sensors in the identification of biological molecules or fragments. Such an increasing interest has been seen in a wide range of industries including clinical chemistry such as alternative site and critical care measurements, environmental detection of hazardous and mutagenic substances, in-line monitors for the food production industry, gene expression, and the like. For instance, determination of gene sequences is typically based upon spectroscopic characterization of dye molecules that are tagged to specific recognition molecules. The characteristic spectrum of the dye molecule detects binding of the dye molecule to a biological fragment such as DNA. Drawbacks of using the spectroscopy technique include limited sensitivity and selectivity of the technique.

20 Chemical sensors with enhanced sensitivity have been used for detection in such industries. A typical chemical sensor device is a chemically sensitive field effect transistor (chem-FET). Typical chem-FET devices have relied on the use of a porous dielectric layer into which a substance such as a chemical to be detected is absorbed. The dielectric constant of the dielectric layer is altered by such absorption, which results in a positive detection of the substance. Drawbacks to chem-FETs include a susceptibility to moisture. For instance, a dielectric layer sufficiently porous to allow for DNA will typically also allow water into the gate of the chem-FET, which can result in failure of the device. Consequently, chem-FET devices having carbon nanotubes have been used for such detection. The carbon nanotubes are usually used as a bridge between the source and the drain. The presence of certain molecules such as oxygen or ammonia can alter the overall conductivity of the carbon nanotube by the donation or acceptance of electrons. Selectivity in the carbon nanotubes is typically achieved

by functionalizing a majority or all of the surface of the carbon nanotube through the placement of specific functional groups on the nanotube surface, with such functional groups having the ability to selectively bind specific target molecules. Drawbacks of such chem-FETs comprising carbon nanotubes include functionalization changing the electronic properties from that of a semiconductor to that of an insulator. Further drawbacks include the diversity of tube diameters, chiral angles, and aggregation states of the tubes.

Consequently, there is a need for a more efficient chem-FET having improved selectivity and sensitivity. Further needs include a chem-FET that is not susceptible to damage by absorption of water through the dielectric layer. Additional needs include a chem-FET with carbon nanotubes that maintain their semiconductivity.

BRIEF SUMMARY OF SOME OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

These and other needs in the art are addressed in one embodiment by an inventive field effect transistor. The field effect transistor comprises a source; a drain; a gate; at least one carbon nanotube on the gate; and a dielectric layer that coats the gate and a portion of the at least one carbon nanotube, wherein the at least one carbon nanotube has an exposed portion that is not coated with the dielectric layer, and wherein the exposed portion is functionalized with at least one indicator molecule.

In other embodiments, the invention comprises a method for making a transistor. The method comprises providing a field effect transistor comprising a source, a gate, and a drain, wherein at least one nanotube is on the gate; coating the at least one nanotube and the gate with a dielectric layer; etching a portion of the at least one nanotube to provide an exposed nanotube portion; and functionalizing the exposed nanotube portion.

In a further embodiment, the invention comprises a biochem-FET. The biochem-FET comprises a FET having a gate; at least one carbon nanotube on the gate; and a dielectric layer that coats the gate and a portion of the at least one carbon nanotube, wherein the at least one carbon nanotube has an exposed portion that is not coated with the dielectric layer; and at least one indicator molecule on the exposed portion.

An additional embodiment of the invention comprises a biochem-FET array. The biochem-FET array comprises a plurality of biochem-FETs wherein each biochem-FET comprises a FET having a gate; at least one carbon nanotube on the gate; a dielectric layer that coats the gate and a portion of the at least one carbon nanotube; wherein the at least one carbon nanotube has an exposed portion that is not coated with the dielectric layer; and at least one indicator molecule on the exposed portion; and a substrate.

In alternative embodiments, the carbon nanotube is a single-walled carbon nanotube. Further alternative embodiments include the dielectric layer comprising silica.

It will therefore be seen that a technical advantage of the present invention includes an improved field effect transistor that overcomes the problem of external attack of the gate. The gate is protected from external attack by the dielectric obscuring the surface of the gate. Further advantages include overcoming the problem of a functionalized nanotube changing from a semiconductor to an insulator and that nanotubes are themselves sensitive to external chemical environments (J. Kong, N. R. Franklin, C. W. Zhou, M. G. Chapline, S. Peng, K. J. Cho, and H. J. Dai, "Nanotube molecular wires as chemical sensors," *Science*, 2000, 287, 622-625). Such a change typically adversely affects operation of the field effect transistor (P. G. Collins, K. Bradley, M. Ishigami, and A. Zettl, "Extreme oxygen sensitivity of electronic properties of carbon nanotubes," *Science*, 2000, 287, 1801-1804).

The foregoing has broadly outlined the features and technical advantages of the present invention in order that the detailed description of the invention that follows may be better understood. Additional features and advantages of the invention will be described hereinafter that form the subject of the claims of the invention. It should be appreciated by those skilled in the art that the conception and the specific embodiments disclosed may be readily utilized as a basis for modifying or designing other structures for carrying out the same purposes of the present invention. It should also be realized by those skilled in the art that such equivalent constructions do not depart from the spirit and scope of the invention as set forth in the appended claims.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

For a detailed description of the preferred embodiments of the invention, reference will now be made to the accompanying drawing in which the drawing illustrates a biochem-FET array having a plurality of biochem-FETs.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

The Biochem-FET

The drawing illustrates a biochem-FET array 5 comprising a plurality of biochem-FETs 8 and a substrate 10. Substrate 10 can be any shape and comprise any components suitable for supporting field effect transistors (FETs). Without limiting the invention, examples of suitable components for base 10 include silicon, germanium, GaAs, or InP, preferably silicon. Biochem-FET 8 comprises a FET 15 and a nanotube 35. FET 15 comprises a source 20, a gate 25, and a drain 30. FETs are well known in the art, and FET 15 can comprise any FET suitable for use in biochem-FET 8 of the present invention. Without limiting the present invention, FET

15 is an example of a typical FET comprising a source 20, a gate 25, and a drain 30. Sources for FETs are well known in the art, and source 20 can comprise any suitable source that can be formed as known to one of ordinary skill in the art. Gates for FETs are well known in the art, and gate 25 can comprise any suitable gate for use in biochem-FET 8 of the present invention.

5 Drains for FETs are well known in the art, and drain 30 can comprise any suitable drain that can be formed as known to one of ordinary skill in the art. Without limiting the scope of the invention, examples of suitable materials for source 20, gate 25, and drain 30 include metallic wires, gold, platinum, copper, chromium, titanium, and the like.

As illustrated on the drawing, biochem-FET 8 comprises one nanotube 35. In
10 alternative embodiments (not illustrated), biochem-FET 8 can comprise more than one nanotube 35. Nanotube 35 comprises carbon nanotubes, which are well known in the art and are a type of fullerene having an elongated, tube-like shape of fused six-membered and five-membered rings. Carbon nanotubes can be single walled carbon nanotubes or multi-walled carbon nanotubes. Single-walled carbon nanotubes differ from multi-walled carbon nanotubes
15 by the number of tubes. Single-walled carbon nanotubes comprise one tube about a given center, and multi-walled carbon nanotubes comprise at least two nested tubes about a common center. When biochem-FET 8 comprises one nanotube 35, nanotube 35 can be a single-walled nanotube or a multi-walled nanotube. When chem-FET 5 comprises more than one nanotube 35, the nanotubes 35 can be single-walled nanotubes, multi-walled nanotubes, or mixtures thereof. Nanotubes 35 are coated with a dielectric and preferably at least a portion of the
20 surface of the coated nanotube 35 is etched.

A Method of Making the Biochem-FET

The present invention provides a method for making biochem-FET 8, with the method comprising the steps of (A) providing a FET 15 comprising a source 20, a gate 25, and a
25 drain 30, wherein at least one nanotube 35 is on the gate 25; (B) coating the at least one nanotube 35 and the FET 15 with a dielectric; (C) etching at least a portion of the dielectric coating on the at least one nanotube 35 to provide an exposed nanotube portion 40; and (D) functionalizing the exposed nanotube portion 40.

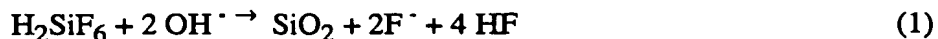
The at least one nanotube 35 is preferably grown or attached on gate 25. Processes for
30 growing and attaching nanotubes are well known in the art, and the present invention includes any suitable process for growing or attaching nanotubes 35 on gate 25. In growing nanotubes 35, preferably, an aperture or hole is located at a desired position on gate 25. The aperture or hole can be formed by any available methods such as laser drilling, wet etching, and dry etching. After locating the hole at the desired location, a catalyst is placed in the aperture or

hole. Catalysts for growing nanotubes are well known in the art, and the present invention can include any catalyst suitable for growing nanotubes 35. Examples of suitable catalysts include metal, metal alloy, superconducting metal, metal cluster compounds and any other suitable catalyst. The catalysts are then synthesized by synthesizing methods to grow nanotubes 35.

5 Preferably, nanotubes 35 are grown in a vertical direction. Synthesizing methods are well known in the art, and the present invention can include any suitable synthesizing method. Without limiting the invention, examples of suitable synthesizing methods include catalyst thermal decomposition, laser vaporization and arc discharge, plasma enhanced chemical vapor deposition, and hot-filament vapor deposition.

10 Attaching nanotube 35 comprises attaching a preformed nanotube to gate 25 by reaction of a chemically functionalized surface of gate 25 with an appropriately functionalized nanotube. Methods for functionalizing silica or metal surfaces are well known in the art, and methods for providing functionalization of nanotubes are also well known in the art. A typical functionalization of a nanotube is through the formation of carboxylate groups on the ends of
15 the nanotubes.

FET 15 and nanotube 35 are coated with a dielectric layer. In alternative embodiments, nanotube 35 and gate 25 are coated with a dielectric layer. Coating nanotubes is well known in the art, and FET 15 and nanotube 35 can be coated by any suitable process. For instance, liquid phase deposition, chemical vapor deposition, electrochemical deposition, and sol-gel can be
20 used as coating processes, preferably liquid phase deposition. Preferably, the coating is sufficient to prevent substances such as chemicals, water, oxygen, organic acids, citric acid, and other chemicals present in the detection mixture that are not to be detected from contacting FET 15 and nanotube 35. The coating can be any thickness suitable for preventing such contact. Preferably, the coating thickness is 1–100 nm. More preferably, the coating thickness is 1–20
25 nm. Suitable coatings include silica or other oxides that have dielectric properties and are chemically inert under the required application conditions of the chem-FET. Preferably, the coating comprises silica. Without limiting the invention, a dielectric layer comprising silica is coated on gate 25 and nanotube 35 by contacting gate 25 and nanotube 35 with a solution comprising silica. The silica is preferably at least partially dissolved in the solution. More
30 preferably, the solution comprises H_2SiF_6 . Without being bound by any particular theory, it is believed that fluorosilicic acid can react with a base to produce silica, as shown in Equation (1).



Chemically functionalized substrates, such as hydroxylated C₆₀, can react with the acid in a condensation reaction, in turn acting as a nucleation site to begin layer growth as shown in Equation (2).



5 Growth occurs at the initial silicate and reacts with additional fluorosilicic acid to grow layers of silica on the particle. In an alternative embodiment, the nanotubes may be functionalized by the addition of a surfactant. The growth of the dielectric thus occurs within the surfactant coating.

In alternative embodiments, biochem-FET 8 comprises more than one dielectric layer.

10 In such alternative embodiments, the dielectric layers can be the same or different coatings.

The top end of coated nanotube 35 is etched to remove the coating and provide an exposed nanotube portion 40. Exposed nanotube portion 40 preferably comprises the tip of nanotube 35. In alternative embodiments, exposed nanotube portion 40 comprises a portion of nanotube 35 greater than the tip. Etching coated nanotubes is well known in the art, and the coated nanotubes 35 of the present invention can be etched by any suitable etching process. Examples of suitable etching processes include plasma reactive etching, chemical acid etching, reactive ion etching, hydrofluoric acid (HF), hydrochloric acid, and the like. Preferably, the etching process is by hydrofluoric acid. It is required that sufficient surface of the nanotube be exposed during the etch step to allow for functionalization or interaction with an indicator molecule.

Functionalizing exposed nanotube portion 40 comprises attaching at least one indicator molecule to exposed nanotube portion 40. Functionalizing nanotubes is well known in the art. Preferable techniques for functionalizing exposed nanotube portion 40 include chemical functionalization. Chemical functionalization includes any chemical reaction that modifies and/or adds chemical groups to the surface of exposed nanotube portion 40, which can be used to deposit reactive groups on the surface of exposed nanotube portion 40. Any chemical reaction known in the art can be used to functionalize exposed nanotube portion 40. Without limiting the invention, examples of suitable chemical reactions include hydroxylation, oxidation to form carboxylate groups, epoxidation, and reaction with a suitable organic reagent to create a functional group such as an organic hydroxide. The preferable chemical reaction is hydroxylation, which is well known in the art. It is believed that the dielectric coating protects FET 15 and non-exposed portion of carbon nanotube 35. Indicator molecules of the present invention include any molecule that is attachable to exposed nanotube portion 40. Preferable

indicator molecules include molecules that are chemically sensitive and interact with a target molecule. The target molecule is preferably a biological group, but it is to be understood that the target molecule can comprise any chemical. Most preferably, the indicator molecule is a DNA oligo or a polypeptide. The DNA oligo can be any suitable DNA oligo, preferably a DNA oligo specific for a target molecule comprising a DNA sequence. It has not been demonstrated, but it is believed that binding of a target molecule to the indicator molecule will cause an electric charge to pass from the target molecule to carbon nanotube 35. Carbon nanotube 35 conducts the electric charge to FET 15. Biochem-FET 8 preferably transmits such an electric charge to a computer or other device suitable for recording and analyzing the charge. Analyzation of the charge can be accomplished for a wide variety of applications. Without limiting the invention, examples of such applications include DNA genotyping, sensing of particular DNA sequences, and sensing of particular proteins.

It is to be understood that biochem-FET array 5 can comprise biochem-FETs 8 that have the same indicator molecules or can comprise biochem-FETs 8 having different indicator molecules from each other. It is to be further understood that each biochem-FET 8 can have one or more than one type of indicator molecule.

To further illustrate various illustrative embodiments of the present invention, the following examples are provided.

EXAMPLES

Examples 1-3

Examples 1-3 are examples of functionalization of a fullerene.

Example 1: 1,2-(4'-oxocyclohexano)fullerene

2-trimethylsilyloxy-1,3-butadiene (0.248 g) in 20 mL dried degassed toluene was added drop-wise to a refluxing solution of 1.00 g fullerene in 350 mL toluene under nitrogen. The solution refluxed for 24 h and then cooled to room temperature. Toluene was evaporated off under vacuum and mild heat (ca. 40 °C). The resulting crude product was dissolved in a minimal amount of carbon disulfide and loaded on a column packed with silica flash gel in hexanes. Unreacted fullerene (purple) was eluted with a carbon disulfide/hexanes 1:1 and then product (dark brown) was eluted with toluene. Toluene was roto-vapped off before mild heating under vacuum to give dry crystalline product.

Example 2: 1,2-(4'-hydroxycyclohexano)fullerene

A slight excess of DIBAL-H (~ 1mL) was added via syringe to a solution of .300 g 1,2,4'-oxocyclohexano)fullerene in dry toluene and stirred overnight at room temperature. 40 mL of saturated ammonium chloride solution was added, and the solution was stirred for 3 h.

The organic layer separated and the aqueous layer was extracted with toluene (2 x 50 mL). The combined organic phases were dried over sodium sulfate and followed by evaporation of the solvent. Flash chromatography on a column of silica with toluene followed by evaporation produced a reddish dark brown solid.

5 **Example 3:** 1,2-(4'-bromoacetyloxycyclohexano)fullerene

0.62 mL bromoacetyl bromide was added to a solution of 0.120 g 1,2-(4'-hydroxycyclohexano)fullerene and 80 mL dry toluene. The solution was refluxed 1 h and then the solvent was evaporated. Elution through a column of silica with toluene afforded, after evaporating the solvent and drying under vacuum and heat, a dark brown solid.

10 **Example 4**

Example 4 demonstrates attachment of an indicator molecule to a fullerene.

Example 4: oligonucleotide attachment to 1,2-(4'-bromoacetyloxycyclohexano)fullerene

Using a 3:1 molar ratio of oligonucleotide to derivitized fullerene, 39 nmole oligo in 50 μ L water was added to 195 μ L of a 0.6 mM solution 1,2-(4'-
15 bromoacetyloxycyclohexano)fullerene in DMF. This solution was diluted to 500 μ L and then 500 μ L distilled chloroform was added..

Examples 5-6

Examples 5-6 demonstrate coating nanotubes with a suitable dielectric.

Example 5:

20 Fumed silica (3.0 g) was added to 50 mL of 3.20 M fluorosilicic acid solution (H_2SiF_6 : Riedel de Haen, 34% pure) and allowed to stir overnight. This solution was then filtered by vacuum through a 0.22 micron Millipore filter. The filtrate was diluted to 1.0 M with UP water. A portion of this solution (100 mL) was added to a 1% SDS solution (1 mL) containing dispersed single walled carbon nanotubes (SWNT, 50 mg/L). These were allowed to react in a
25 plastic centrifuge tube, with stirring, at 30 °C for four hours. The reaction was then quenched with ethanol and centrifuged at 4400 rpm for 15 minutes.

Example 6:

30 Fumed silica (3.0 g) was added to 50 mL of 3.20 M fluorosilicic acid solution (H_2SiF_6 : Riedel de Haen, 34% pure) and allowed to stir overnight. This solution was then filtered, by vacuum, through a 0.22 micron Millipore filter. The filtrate was diluted to 1.0 M with UP water. A portion of this solution (5 mL) was added to a 1% SDS solution (5 mL) containing dispersed SWNT (50 mg/L). These were allowed to react in a plastic centrifuge tube, with stirring, at 30 °C for four hours. The reaction was then quenched with ethanol to yield silica coated SWNT.

Example 7

Example 7 demonstrates etching of silica SWNTs.

Example 7:

5 Products from Examples 5 and 6 were dried on a surface and selectively etched with hydrofluoric acid (1%). They were then thoroughly rinsed with UP water and dried for characterization.

Although the present invention and its advantages have been described in detail, it should be understood that various changes, substitutions and alterations may be made herein without departing from the spirit and scope of the invention as defined by the appended claims.